

PINE BLUFF COMMERCIAL

'First in Southeast Arkansas'



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Pine Bluff man arrested in Conway kidnapping

By Amy Widner
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

Police are looking for a man who used a brown truck stolen from Pine Bluff in the kidnapping of a Conway couple Tuesday. Another Pine Bluff man has already been arrested in the case.

The female kidnapping victim, Jaleesa Carter of Conway, is about nine months pregnant and jumped from a moving vehicle

to escape her kidnappers, said La Tresha Woodruff, public information officer for the Conway Police Department.

"He turned off on an unpaved road and she said she felt like he was going to kill her, so she jumped out," Woodruff said. "He was armed with a SKF, an assault rifle."

Carter was hospitalized for a deep gash on her hand and other

cuts, but Woodruff said at last check she and the unborn baby were in good condition.

Carter was kidnapped in the brown truck, which police believe was stolen from Pine Bluff, Woodruff said. After she jumped out of the vehicle, her assailant abandoned the brown truck and fled on foot. Woodruff said that the suspect is a black male, but police have few other details of

his description at this time.

Woodruff said police believe the suspect has Pine Bluff connections. They have already arrested Luke Spencer, 22, of Pine Bluff in connection with the incident.

Spencer was cited for kidnapping, aggravated assault, aggravated residential burglary, theft of property, being a felon in possession of a firearm, fleeing the



Spencer

Please see KIDNAPPING on 3

FINAL FOUR

■ PB board narrows superintendent search

By Michael S. Lee
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

The Pine Bluff School Board will interview four finalists for the position of Pine Bluff School District superintendent from May 23 through May 26.

Chosen as the best representatives of the criteria supplied to the executive search firm McPherson & Jacobson by the board in March, the four will each spend one day being interviewed by five separate focus groups in addition to the school board.

The finalists as announced by M & J search coordinators Kieth Williams and Diana Julian, are Mary E. Guinn, superintendent of schools in Gary, Indiana for six years, Saul Lusk, with 13 years of superintendent experience in Arkansas, Jerry O. Payne, with six years of superintendent experience, including the Bogalusa, Louisiana school district when Hurricane Katrina hit in 2005, and Donald W. Smith, with three years of superintendent experience as well as the head football coach at Kentucky State University.

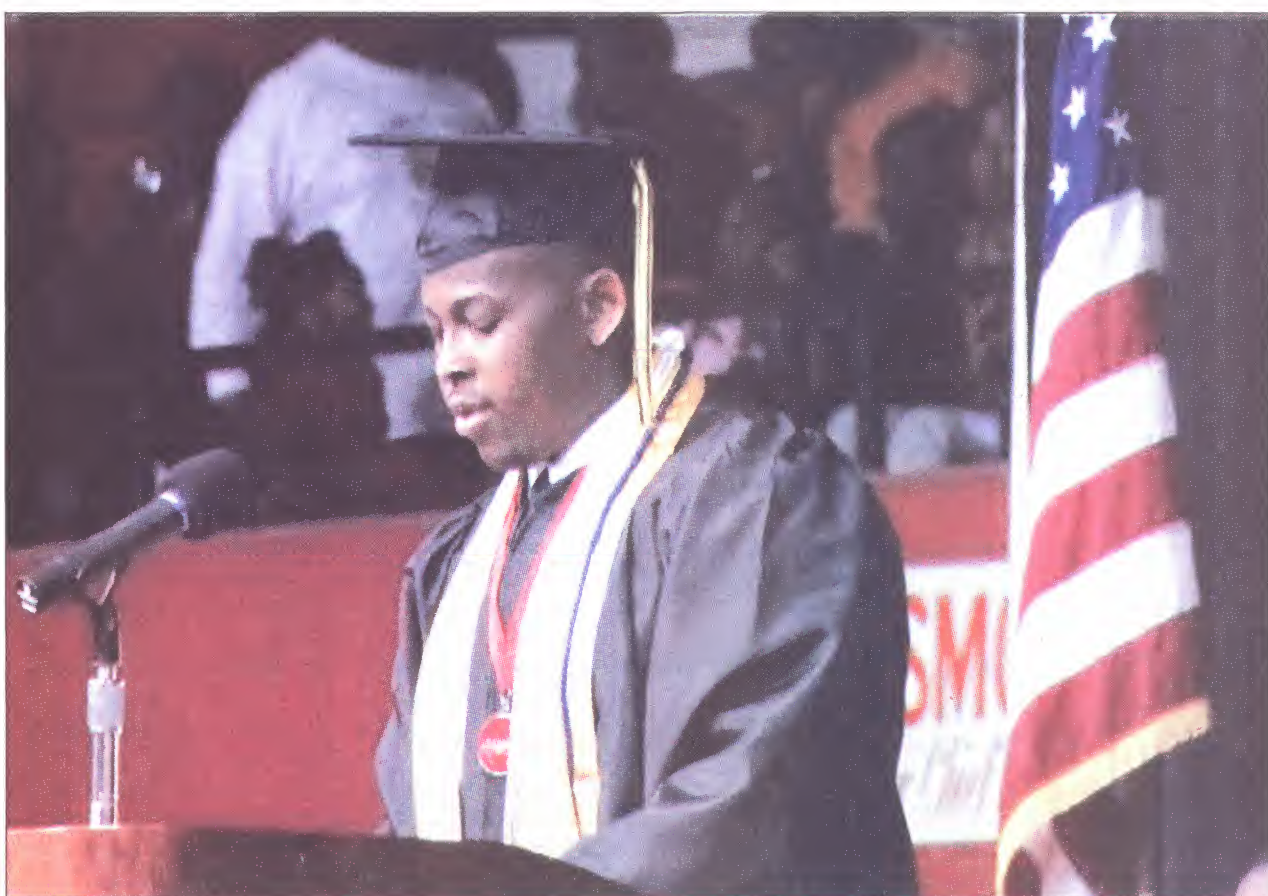
Guinn is recognized for her high ethical standards and her integrity, and as superintendent of the Gary, Indiana school district oversaw a budget of \$195 million, according to Williams.

Lusk was superintendent during the difficult involuntary merger of the Strong and Huttig, Arkansas school districts in Union county, and has experience leading school districts with declining enrollments and finances, according to Julian.

Payne was principal in the Bogalusa, Louisiana city school district in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit, dropping enrollment by 25 percent

Please see PBSN on 2

GRADUATION NIGHT



Special to The Commercial/Bo Rogers

Above, salutatorian Christopher Jones speaks at Watson Chapel High School's graduation ceremony Tuesday night at the Pine Bluff Convention Center. At right, Lakesha Foote, Dollarway High School senior class sponsor, helps Cederra Young adjust her cap before Dollarway's graduation at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's HPER Complex. For a complete list of graduates, visit The Commercial website, www.pbcommercial.com



Pine Bluff Commercial/Rachel Grant

Speaker: Advertising keeps smoking alive

By Rachel Grant
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

Although it's been nearly 50 years since a U.S. Surgeon General's report declared smoking causes cancer, smoking hasn't ended because of advertising, an expert said Tuesday.

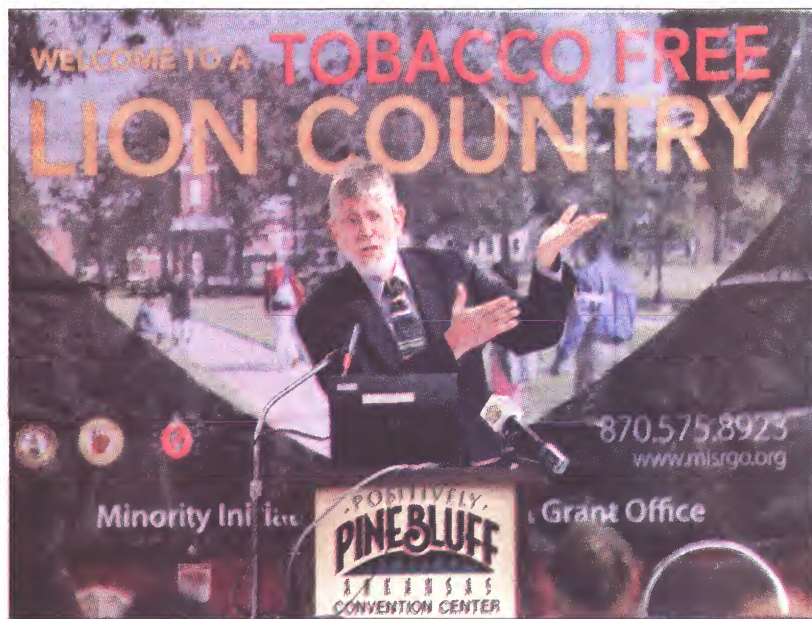
Dr. Alan Blum, director of the University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco & Society, was among speakers at the eighth annual Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference Tuesday.

The conference is sponsored by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff's Minority Initiative Sub-recipient Grant Office and will continue today at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

"Smoking is a contributing factor to the top three leading causes of death," Blum said. "The case is closed and it is ancient history that smoking causes cancer. We need to find a way to end this epidemic."

He said research reports in 1941 showed that smoking caused cancer and by the 1960s the nation wanted to end any doubts about smoking.

Please see SMOKING on 3



Pine Bluff Commercial/Ralph Fitzgerald

Dr. Alan Blum, director of the University of Alabama Center for the Study of Tobacco & Society, addresses the eighth annual Clearing the Air in Communities of Color Conference on Tuesday morning at the Pine Bluff Convention Center.

Columnist shares views on politics

By Michael S. Lee
OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

John Brummett, a syndicated columnist with the Arkansas News Bureau, provided Downtown Pine Bluff Rotary Club members with his usual brand of engaging political commentary on Tuesday at the Pine Bluff Country Club.

Brummett discussed several columns he has written on the 2012 Republican presidential race and his apparent pre-science concerning several early front-runners.

"This Huckabee business has been great for me. The thing people need to realize is that Huckabee is a politician probably second and a minister third, and a showbiz-news media personality first and foremost. When he was governor he took the room with some nice, old furniture where press conferences

Please see ROTARY on 2

Inside today's newspaper ...

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Market watch

May 17, 2011

Dow Jones
industrials
12,479.58
-58.79

Nasdaq
composite
2,783.21
+10.90

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Town with no bank

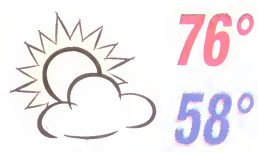
Closure will leave Humphrey without bank.

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Disaster assistance

Help available for residents through state agency.

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Details: Page 12



Today's edition honors Martel Culclager of Pine Bluff.